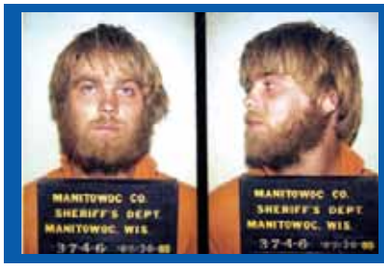

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EMILY JACKSON/METRO

STEPPING FORWARD

Voices added to human-rights complaint over UBC's handling of sexual misconduct metroNEWS

Resolution fees doubled

HOUSING

Disputes between landlords, tenants just got costlier

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A Vancouver MLA is condemning the B.C. government's decision to quietly hike dispute-resolution fees for landlords and tenants as yet another attack on housing affordability.

Just before the holidays, the province doubled dispute-resolution application fees to $100 from $50. That could add about $1.1 million to government coffers annually, as the province received more than 22,000 such applications in 2014 and 2015, according to the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB).

NDP Vancouver-Point Grey MLA David Eby criticized the Liberal government for making the changes without an announcement and called the hike another "hidden tax" on top of fee increases for B.C. Ferries, Medical Service Plans and B.C. Hydro.

"When everyone is talking about making housing more affordable, this government is now increasing the costs for landlords and tenants," Eby said Wednesday. "Now a process that was pretty crappy to start with costs twice as much."

Tenants and landlords use the process to resolve fights over repairs or evictions. Eby worries the higher fees will deter tenants from complaining in a market in which renters are already fearful of losing their homes due to extremely low vacancy rates.

No one from the RTB was available for an interview. In an emailed statement, a spokesperson said the fee changes were introduced after a five per cent increase in dispute-resolution applications and that it's the first increase since 1998.

The RTB will use the extra cash to hire new arbitrators to reduce wait times for urgent applications, according to the statement. It also plans to develop new technology to resolve disputes more efficiently.

Fees will continue to be waived for people who qualify as low-income. The changes come into effect Friday.

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At sea: Artistic odyssey

TRAVELLING RESIDENCY

Photographer broadens his horizons aboard ship

Tereza Verenca
Metro | Vancouver

Artist Christopher Boyne took this photo en route to China last year. While the cargo ship was lonesome at times, he was excited to be on board. CONTRIBUTED

Vancouver's Access Gallery has once again made a call for submissions from emerging artists interested in spending 23 days at sea.

The travelling residency, now in its second year, is a partnership between the Chinatown gallery and the Burrard Arts Foundation.

Lucky grant recipients cross the Pacific Ocean via cargo ship in what amounts to just over three weeks. They board in Vancouver and sail all the way to Shanghai, China.

The only catch is each artist embarks on the journey solo (besides the crew, of course). Once aboard, they can use the time to either build a new body of work or observe their surroundings for a project afterwards.

Whatever is created is then put on display at Access Gallery the following year.

"A conventional residence, which normally offers studio space and an apartment to live in, that's obviously expensive in Vancouver, so we knew that wasn't an option for us," said curator Kimberly Phillips. "I thought, well what could we do that is more innovative, more brave.

"I'm interested in how artists respond to different types of constraints of time and space. It's a very quiet space on the ship. You're completely detached from your everyday life. There's really no Internet access. You can't surf the web or go on Facebook."

Christopher Boyne was one of three artists who made the voyage last year. The Montreal photographer recalls feeling anxious and nervous prior to stepping onto the vessel.

"We went 19 days without seeing land," he told Metro. "It's strange. You're on a ship with a bunch of other people. The ship is so big. Even if there are only 20 people, only half are on call. You really do feel alone."

But that feeling of isolation didn't get the best of Boyne. It was liberating, he said.

Having never been to China before, however, resulted in complete culture shock.

"Coming off the ship, where I had just seen the same 20 faces over and over again, everything was calm and quiet. You live a very particular routine; everything is structured around these meal times. It's almost like being in school, like the bell rings and everybody goes to eat lunch.

> "It's a very quiet space on the ship. **You're completely detached from your everyday life.**
> Kimberly Phillips

"To go from that to just the chaos of this enormous, that was totally bizarre. It took me like two days to even be able to cope and function."

After returning to Canada and sifting through his photos, Boyne said he realized something. Of the several thousand images, most were of the water, with maybe five of the crew. He also noticed being around people again was an adjustment.

Though Boyne couldn't divulge too much of his final project, which will be exhibited at Access Gallery between May 27 and June 16, he did say it involves a lot of woodworking and that it's very "labour intensive."

Phillips anticipates a slew of applications in the coming weeks, with nearly 900 submissions received last year and only two to three spots to fill.

Applicants are encouraged to propose projects relating to sea travel and global shipping.

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Cancer agency burgled twice

CRIME

Thieves steal $10,000 worth of goods from charity office

Tereza Verenca
Metro | Vancouver

Around $10,000 worth of goods were stolen in a pair of break-ins at the B.C. Cancer Foundation's West Broadway office over the holidays.

Lou Del Gobbo, the organization's interim president and CEO, said the thieves ransacked the joint not once, but twice — sometime in the early hours of the New Year and then again a couple days later on Sunday. Items taken include computers, monitors, a TV and a bike.

"It's quite a shock to everybody that people would stoop to this level and to actually steal from a charity. It's quite a personal affront and we're all a little taken back by it," he said, adding no donor information or donations were stolen.

"We make sure that all of our donor information is stored on our network drives and as far as donations, we don't keep anything on site, they're all secured."

Del Gobbo noted the mood around the office was very sombre.

"It's the start of a fresh new year, everybody's ready to go, and you come in and see your offices ransacked, so it had an immediate impact. We have a very strong passionate team and everybody rallied around and we had the place pretty much cleaned up after a couple of days."

> **"It's quite a shock to everybody that people would stoop to this level.**
> Lou Del Gobbo

The stolen bike belonged to Erik Dierks, the B.C. Cancer Foundation's vice president of development, who used the two wheels to ride in every Ride to Conquer Cancer event since 2013.

"Over the past seven years, we've raised over $70 million. To see my partner in that endeavour gone, it was disappointing," he told Metro. "That bike and I had done hundreds, if not thousands of kilometres in training and riding. To see something that was used for something I feel so passionately about — raising money to support cancer research — stung."

To ensure it doesn't happen again, Del Gobbo said the foundation will undergo a full review and is in talks with the landlord about how to better secure the area.

Thieves stole from the B.C. Cancer Foundation twice over the holidays. CONTRIBUTED

Nancy Taylor was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in November. CONTRIBUTED

COMMUNITY

Woman looks to community for stem-cell match

A North Shore woman who has given years of her life to her community is hopeful someone will return the favour.

Nancy Taylor, a city of North Vancouver employee and a long-time volunteer with the North Vancouver RCMP, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia last November.

Up until that point, the mother-of-two lived an active lifestyle, hitting the gym and riding her motorcycle.

She recalls feeling ill about a month before the diagnosis, like she had to faint.

"It was a complete shock. We were just devastated when we heard," she said of the news. "We just all broke down and cried."

As a way of helping one of their own, North Vancouver Mounties have teamed up with the Canadian Blood Services to help find a stem-cell match (because Taylor is of Indonesian and Dutch descent, this has been difficult).

A public clinic for potential donors to have a quick cheek swab is being held at the detachment on Thursday.

In the meantime, Taylor is being kept in remission through chemotherapy. She takes around 20 pills a day, chemo treatment through her spine and brain on Wednesdays and chemotherapy intravenously three days after that.

Cpl. Richard De Jong has worked with Taylor over the years and describes her as "very caring."

"I've got a terrible cold and when I was talking to her on the phone the other day, she said, 'How are you? I hope you feel better.' She's just really concerned for everyone's well being, probably more so than her own."

He added he'd like to see a lot of first responders in that lineup on Thursday.

"It's literally a 20 minute coffee break, to come down and get swabbed and you're out of there, so it doesn't take much to potentially save someone's life."

The clinic, which will also beef up the stem cell bank, runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. inside the briefing room at 147 East 14th St.

Anyone aged 17 to 35 is encouraged to attend.

TEREZA VERENCA/METRO

Community Mental Health and Addictions Worker Diploma

Community Mental Health and Addictions Workers assist individuals with mental health, housing and addiction challenges by encouraging and supporting them in their daily lives. Community Mental Health and Addictions Workers work in shelters, transitional housing, single residential occupancy hotels, supportive permanent housing, outreach programs, life skills services, recreation and wellness programs, food programs, health services, and recovery and treatment facilities.

"For the first time in my life, I know my purpose … to help those in need. Whether that help is a shelter bed, a hot meal, or to lend an ear in times of emotional distress, I love going to work day in, day out. Thanks for helping this spark grow into a flame Stenberg!." – Troy Balderson, *Mental Health & Addiction Worker*

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Officer denies illegal sting charge

COURT

Pair was found guilty of plot to blow up the B.C. legislature

John Nuttall and Amanda Korody are shown in a still image taken from RCMP undercover video. COURTESY RCMP/THE CANADIAN PRESS

An undercover terrorism sting involved thousands of dollars changing hands and officers claiming access to guns and explosives, but the lead officer insisted repeatedly in court on Wednesday that the operation was in no way meant to appear criminal.

RCMP Sgt. Bill Kalkat told B.C. Supreme Court that officers never explicitly told John Nuttall he was consorting with a jihadist terrorism group or any other criminal organization.

Nuttall and his wife Amanda Korody were found guilty last June of plotting to blow up the B.C. legislature on Canada Day 2013. No conviction will be entered until a judge decides if police entrapped the pair.

"Mr. Nuttall and Ms. Korody were free to come to whatever inference or decision they wanted. We didn't persuade them or dissuade them one way or another," Kalkat told the court.

"Nuttall might infer that it's a criminal organization. I don't know what he's thinking."

Nuttall and Korody's lawyers are arguing police manipulated the pair into carrying out the terrorist act.

Early in the undercover operation, Nuttall was paid $200 to take an unmarked package to a transit-station locker in downtown Vancouver.

He was later directed to transport another parcel, this time taking a circuitous transit route and leaving the package in the trunk of an unlocked rental car.

"Would any of that behaviour be consistent with the notion that the package is legitimate and legal?" Korody's lawyer Mark Jette asked.

Kalkat admitted it's possible to interpret the operation as illegitimate but emphasized that Nuttall was always informed the contents of the packages were legal.

Another scenario involved officers engaging Nuttall in a "loyalty talk" before showing him $20,000 in cash being exchanged between undercover officers and talk of a commission.

"I'm going to suggest to you that you designed it that way because you wanted Nuttall to believe that (the primary undercover officer) was engaged in nefarious, probably illegal activities," said Jette.

> **We didn't persuade them or dissuade them one way or another.**
> Sgt. Bill Kalkat

"No, not that he's engaged in nefarious activities, but that he does have contacts and that he's engaged in business and that he has a source of income," Kalkat replied.

Kalkat explained that Nuttall could have interpreted the exchange as hawala, an informal system of transferring large sums of money for a commission, which the officer said was common practice in India and the Middle East.

"Really?" Jette asked. "Do you have any information that would lead you to believe that Mr. Nuttall was aware of underground Indian banking systems?"

"It's possible," Kalkat replied. "Mr. Nuttall has extensive, in my opinion, knowledge of some of the Middle Eastern practices."

"You really thought that Nuttall would put all those pieces together?" Jette said. "John Nuttall? Really?"

"Yes, I did." said Kalkat.

Earlier in the day, Kalkat said he "absolutely" urged his officers to consider the fact that Nuttall appeared developmentally delayed, telling the court that police scenarios were designed to take Nuttall's mental capacity into account.

Kalkat also said he was aware as early as March that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Canada's spy agency, had been conducting its own surveillance of Nuttall.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Drought harder on farms in developed countries: Study

New research suggests farms in developed countries may be more vulnerable to longer, deeper droughts predicted to occur as a result of climate change.

"(Those farms) are really good in terms of producing high yields in stable climates, but maybe they're more vulnerable to weather shocks," said Navin Ramankutty of the University of British Columbia, co-author of a paper published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

Ramankutty and his colleagues examined United Nations crop data from 177 countries between the years 1964 and 2007. Yields were correlated with about 2,800 extreme weather events over that time, including heat waves, droughts, cold snaps and floods.

The researchers found that droughts produced the greatest impact on yields. But in what Ramankutty called "a big surprise," droughts hit farms in North America, Europe and Australia much harder than they hit farms in less-developed countries.

In the developed countries, droughts cut yields by an average of nearly 20 per cent. The drop was just over 12 per cent in Asia and slightly more than nine per cent in Africa. In Latin America, droughts had no significant impact.

Ramankutty suggests the differences may be due to the type of agriculture commonly practised in developed nations — large, intensively cultivated fields sown exclusively to one crop.

Western farmers may need to start thinking differently as climate becomes less and less predictable, Ramankutty said.

"That model works really well when the climate is stable, but it may not work so well when there is an extreme weather event."

In other countries, fields tend to be smaller and crops more diverse. That may give farms more resilience, Ramankutty suggested. "Maybe their yields are lower but they're not as susceptible to weather shocks."

Scientists have long warned that more frequent and increasingly severe droughts are likely to be among the consequences of climate change.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRIME

Police say shotgun used to pepper three homes

Mounties in Chilliwack believe three shootings in 10 days are connected, and they're asking for the public's help as they investigate.

Police responded to a report of a shotgun fired at a house on the morning of Dec. 24. Two days later, shots were fired at another house a few minutes' drive away. Early on Jan. 2, police say a 911 caller reported that a shotgun was used to strike another home just blocks from the other two houses.

Police responded immediately and confirmed the shooting, but no suspects could be found and no one has been injured.

Cpl. Mike Rail says police believe the incidents were targeted and they're hoping someone will provide more information about the shootings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Grad student builds up complaint against UBC

HARASSMENT

More coming forward in alleged sexual misconduct

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

The University of British Columbia graduate student planning to file a human rights complaint against the university for how it deals with sexual assault complaints is busy building her case against the school after more than a dozen people reached out to tell their own stories of harassment.

Glynnis Kirchmeier, one of three students who lambasted UBC in November for taking a year and a half to expel a student after at least six women accused him of sexual harassment or assault, originally planned to file the complaint with the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal by the end of 2015.

But Kirchmeier said Wednesday it's taking longer than expected after approximately 15 other survivors reached out to share their experiences dating back to the 1990s of reporting sexual or personal harassment to UBC and the university's alleged subsequent lack of action. Not all want to participate in the complaint, but it has taken time for the lawyer to include the stories of those who do, she said.

The crux of the complaint is that UBC's process causes harm to students who report sexual harassment or assault by prioritizing the rights of the accused and continuously re-victimizing survivors who speak out. After the students drew attention to the problem, UBC issued an apology and promised an independent investigation into the situation. But the women involved said it was too late.

As the lawyer prepares the complaint, which must be filed by March in order to have a shot at being heard by the tribunal, Kirchmeier is researching best policy practices for sexual misconduct reporting. Speed, transparency, accountability and centralization, among other things, are key areas where she is looking for change.

Ultimately, it's not about the policy but how those who report incidents are treated, she said.

"We're not going to hang our hats totally on UBC needs a new policy… the way it's enacted is more important," she said, adding she has spoken with faculty members who are interested in positive reform.

"I'm doing this to improve the university, not to tear it down."

Anyone who has reported sexual misconduct to UBC officials over the past 20 years who wants to join the human rights complaint can email ubcsexualassault@gmail.com

Former UBC students Glynnis Kirchmeier, foreground, and Caitlin Cunningham participate in a news conference on Nov. 22, 2015 regarding the university's response to alleged sexual assaults by a former student. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **"I'm doing this to improve the university, not to tear it down.**
> Glynnis Kirchmeier

ABBOTSFORD

Woman hit by cars dies

A woman is dead after apparently walking onto the Trans Canada Highway and being struck by several vehicles in Abbotsford shortly after midnight on Wednesday.

The 46-year-old pedestrian of no fixed address was pronounced dead at the scene near Sumas Way, according to a news release from B.C. RCMP Traffic Services.

Based on eyewitness reports, police said the woman walked directly into the path of a 2004 Mazda 3 with an driver described as unsuspecting. She was then struck by "several" vehicles in the eastbound lane.

The Mazda's driver, a 28-year-old Abbotsford man, remained on the scene and is co-operating with investigators. Mounties say he tried to save the woman.

"We understand the driver then put his own safety at risk, trying unsuccessfully to stop other oncoming vehicles from hitting the woman," RCMP spokeswoman Cpl. Ronda McEwen said in a statement. "He was understandably distraught about this tragic event."

Police have yet to identify the other vehicles involved in the fatality, as they did not stay at the scene.

The highway was closed in both directions for five hours while investigators pieced together the collision. B.C. Coroners Service also assisted with the investigation.

Mounties are asking the other drivers, witnesses and anyone with information about what led to the incident to come forward and assist with the investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call 604-702-4039.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Ottawa faces heat for Tories' IT rules

CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

Decision took away ability of courts to select own purchases

Newly released documents show the country's highest court is ready to launch a legal battle with the federal government over new IT rules which the Supreme Court of Canada fears would threaten its independence.

The Supreme Court is not alone in these concerns: the Federal Court, Federal Court of Appeal, Court Martial Appeal Court and Tax Court are all prepared to launch a constitutional challenge against having the government's super-IT department involved in their digital affairs.

The federal Liberals are now left to decide how to handle an issue created by a decision of the previous Conservative government that came into effect during the federal election.

That decision forced the courts to go through Shared Services Canada for all IT purchases, such as servers, routers and software, rather than letting them make the procurements on their own. The courts had that power until Sept. 1, when the new rules kicked in and made them a "mandatory client" of Shared Services Canada, which oversees purchases and digital services for 43 of the heaviest IT users in the federal government.

Briefing material provided to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shortly after he took office shows the courts were worried that having a government department involved in their IT services "and the perceived implications for control of their data" infringed on judicial independence.

"They must maintain control of their data, not only because of concerns about confidentiality, but also because an independent judiciary cannot tolerate having its sensitive information controlled by a separate branch of government," reads part of Trudeau's briefing on urgent issues facing the new government.

If the government doesn't backtrack, judges "are prepared to take legal action," Trudeau was warned. THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **An independent judiciary cannot tolerate having its sensitive information controlled by a separate branch of government.**
> Excerpt from a briefing statement for the PM

The move approved by the Conservative cabinet in May 2015 was supposed to save money, since Shared Services Canada buys in bulk for the federal government, and improve digital security, because Shared Services Canada buys from safe suppliers.

WILDLIFE **Newly named male polar bear cubs** York and Eli, shown at Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park Zoo, are named for York Factory First Nation, which has traditional lands that include important polar bear denning habitats. Eli is named for a York Factory elder. HANDOUT/ASSINIBOINE ZOO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Families meet to talk about coming inquiry

The families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls have been gathering for years — to share their stories, support each other and call for action — but this time was different.

Now that the federal government has committed to holding a national inquiry into the more than 1,200 First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls who have been murdered or gone missing in Canada, families came together in Thunder Bay Wednesday to share their hopes and fears of what it should set out to achieve.

> **They will leave this meeting and go home with the memories of their loved ones.**
> Chief Connie Gray MacKay

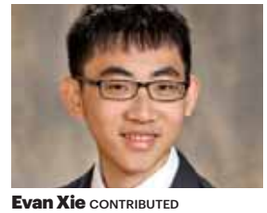
"A lot of people were feeling that they were finally going to have an opportunity to have some closure," said deputy grand chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario.

"Maybe the justice may not take place, but I think even being provided an opportunity to be heard on their concerns and having an opportunity to change the present process," said Achneepineskum, who was at the pre-inquiry consultation meeting Wednesday afternoon.

So were Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu, who along with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould are hearing from families, national aboriginal organizations, frontline service providers and other stakeholders as part of their pre-inquiry consultation process.

The ministers are scheduled to hold similar meetings in Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Vancouver, Prince George, B.C., Halifax, Quebec City and Montreal before the end of the month.

There is also an online survey and discussion guide seeking input from anyone else who wants to contribute, which Bennett said families can also use if they are unable to attend the meetings or prefer to share their ideas in that way. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Evan Xie CONTRIBUTED

COMPETITION

Young man a Master of Memory

A Nova Scotia student has made history as Canada's first International Master of Memory during the 24th annual World Memory Championship a few weeks ago in December. "It's a phenomenal accomplishment," said Chris Strickey, director of admissions at King's-Edgehill School in Windsor where Grade 10 student Evan Xie attends.

Strickey said Xie has become one of only 160 people in the world to receive the distinction. To receive the award, a person must complete three feats at the competition: memorize a minimum of 1,000 digits in random sequence in one hour, memorize a minimum of 12 decks of randomly shuffled cards in one hour, and memorize one card deck in less than two minutes. HALEY RYAN/METRO

Prince William and wife Kate released this image of son George on his first day at school.
CONTRIBUTED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Prince George has class

The heir to the heir to the heir to the British throne has started nursery school.

Prince William and his wife Kate marked the occasion by releasing two photographs of two-and-a-half-year-old George outside the school building.

The royal couple had earlier announced he would be attending Westacre Montessori School in Norfolk, 180 kilometres north of London.

The school has said he will receive the same treatment as other pupils.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

H-bomb threat provokes world

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

North Korea condemned globally for its actions

Soon after the ground shook around its nuclear testing facility, North Korea trumpeted its first hydrogen bomb test — a self-proclaimed "H-bomb of justice" that would mark a major and unanticipated advance for its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

The announcement Wednesday by the defiant, impoverished country was met with widespread skepticism, as well as a strong condemnation by the UN Security Council, which said it would begin work on a resolution for new international sanctions.

North Korea's fourth nuclear test likely pushed its scientists and engineers closer to their goal of building a warhead small enough to place on a missile that can reach the U.S. mainland. But South Korea's spy agency thought the estimated explosive yield from the blast was much smaller than what even a failed hydrogen bomb detonation would produce, and the White House said its early analysis of underground activity "is not consistent" with the North's claim of a successful H-bomb test.

There was high-level concern in Seoul and elsewhere. South Korean President Park Geun-hye ordered her military to bolster its combined defence posture with U.S. forces. She called the test a "grave provocation" and "an act that threatens our lives and future." Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, "We absolutely cannot allow this."

U.S. Defence Secretary Ash Carter spoke by phone with his South Korean counterpart Han Min-Koo, and they agreed that a North Korean nuclear test would be an "unacceptable and irresponsible provocation," according to Carter's spokesman, Peter Cook.

> **We absolutely cannot allow this.**
> Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

North Korea goes to great lengths to conceal its tests by conducting them underground and tightly sealing off tunnels or other vents through which radioactive residue could escape.

A successful H-bomb test would be a big advance in North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Fusion is the main principle behind the hydrogen bomb, which can be hundreds of times more powerful than atomic bombs that use fission..

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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STREAMING VIDEO

Netflix in 130 more countries

Netflix has already crossed off the biggest item on its New Year's list of resolutions. The Internet video service debuted in 130 countries Wednesday in a surprise move likely to reel in millions of new subscribers.

CEO Reed Hastings revealed the scope of Netflix's expansion at the end of a presentation in Las Vegas at CES, one of the technology industry's marquee events.

The news caught almost everyone off guard because Netflix had previously set a goal of being available in most of the world by the end of this year. It looked like the Los Gatos, California, company had plenty of work ahead it because it ended December in 60 countries.

Now, Netflix is available in 21 different languages and streaming in just about every market that it had in its sights, with the notable exception of China, the world's most populous country. Entering China may be a formidable challenge requiring potentially prickly negotiations with a government that blocks its citizenry from seeing material it considers objectionable or incendiary.

Netflix currently has no plans to push into North Korea, Syria or Crimea because of restrictions on U.S. companies operating in those countries.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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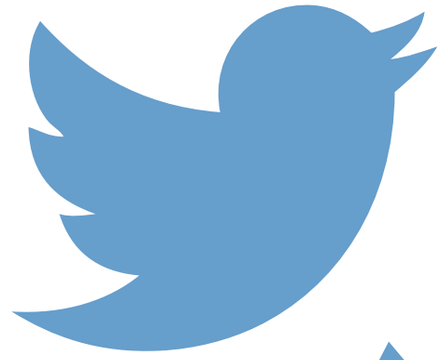

Twitter not tied to 140 characters

SOCIAL MEDIA

CEO tweets screenshot of 1,325-character message

Twitter co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey telegraphed that change is coming in a tweet Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twitter appears ready to loosen its decade-old restriction on the length of messages in a bid to make its service more appealing to a wider audience accustomed to the greater freedom offered by Facebook and other forums.

CEO and co-founder Jack Dorsey telegraphed Twitter's intentions in a tweet posted Tuesday after the technology news site Re/Code reported the company is exploring increasing its limits on text from 140 characters to as many as 10,000.

Dorsey didn't directly address the Re/Code report that cited unnamed people, but he made it clear that Twitter isn't wedded to the 140-character limit. He illustrated his point by posting a screenshot of a text consisting of 1,325 characters.

> **As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it.**
> Jack Dorsey

If Twitter were to allow tweets to span 10,000 characters, it could produce 1,700-word dissertations, based on the size of Dorsey's extended post. In his message, Dorsey wrote that Twitter has already noticed that many of its roughly 300 million users already have been including screenshots of lengthy texts in their tweets. He indicated Twitter is examining ways to give people more room to express themselves without polluting the service with gasbags.

Imposing some restraint "inspires creativity and brevity. And a sense of speed. We will never lose that feeling," Dorsey pledged.

At the same time, Dorsey said Twitter isn't "going to be shy about building more utility and power into Twitter for people. As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it."

Analysts said Dorsey is probably trying to avoid a backlash among long-time Twitter users who consider the 140-character tweeting limit sacred. At the same time, he needs to respond to company shareholders pining for a bigger audience that would generate more advertising revenue.

More revenue eventually could help Twitter turn a profit for the first time in its history.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro VIEWS
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Thursday, January 7, 2016

the big question

Will Obama's tears endear Americans to gun control?

Well, he's unlikely to sway the NRA, but as far as emotional impact goes, **breaking down on live TV isn't a bad strategy for the president**. Scientists have many theories about why adults cry, given that, unlike children, they can use words to express what's wrong. Some speculate that crying evolved as an "attachment behaviour": It's a way to ask others for help when words fail us. And in fact, some studies suggest that photos of teary faces and sad stories with characters who cry both cause research participants to feel sympathetic sadness and a desire to support and comfort the crying person. If Barack Obama — who choked up Tuesday while enumerating the seemingly endless mass shootings that have rocked the U.S. during his presidency — elicited such empathy in his audience, logically they'd want to support his plan to ensure more gun dealers are licensed and conduct background checks. That's guaranteed to make the gun nuts want to weep.

Politician + alcoholism does not equal Rob Ford

Michael Coren
For Metro

To state the bitterly self-evident, politics is a dirty business. But there is also a cloak of decorum that sometimes covers the body politic, with journalists respecting the personal struggles and private pain of many of those who govern us.

There are times when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know.

I have often been impressed at how what is genuinely important on an individual but not political level has remained confidential.

But there are times, of course, when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know. Newly minted Liberal MP and former broadcaster Seamus O'Regan obviously believed this when he recently announced that he is seeking help in a treatment centre to "live an alcohol-free life." In other words, he struggles with alcohol, and as he begins his new work as a representative of the people, realizes that now is the time to change.

I have good friends who have acted similarly. The treatment can be relatively brief, but it's thorough and tough and the struggle never ends. Yet the hardest part is over: the admission that there is a problem. It's humbling, frightening and, of course, opens one up to attack. As it most certainly did in this case.

Within hours of the O'Regan's statement, various conservative activists and even columnists and broadcasters were on the offensive, claiming that the man was "a drunk" and digging up criticisms he had made of former Toronto mayor Rob Ford. There's no difference between the two, they argued, but because one is a Liberal and close to Justin Trudeau he's getting an easy ride.

The juxtaposition is fatuous, offensive and downright cruel. I know O'Regan a little and have always found him to be a gentleman, but the greater point is that unlike Rob Ford, he was completely honest about his problem, there is no police investigation and he doesn't associate with shady characters. There are no manic, racist rants and no embarrassing those people he represents.

Ford used prohibited drugs and repeatedly lied about it. O'Regan drank too much of what is sold on every major street in Canada and told us so. His husband tweeted how proud he was of his decision; Rob Ford is on film offering his wife to another man for sex.

What is remarkable is not how similar, but how different are these two cases. As for those who attacked a man at his most vulnerable, shame on you.

Michael Coren is a writer, broadcaster and author of the forthcoming Epiphany: A Christian's Change of Heart & Mind over Same-Sex Marriage. Find him on Twitter @michaelcoren.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Charlie Hebdo is just not interesting enough to offend me

Despite being Catholic, I'm not offended by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's new cover depicting God as a Kalashnikov-wielding terrorist.

I suppose I could be — the Vatican newspaper is — but that would mean taking the editorial position of the notoriously inflammatory publication seriously. And I don't.

To be clear: The attack one year ago today at Charlie Hebdo's Paris offices was unconscionable, as was the subsequent attack on a Jewish supermarket in the city, which together killed 17 people.

But demeaning faith in the most violent pen strokes is the magazine's raison d'être, and so I'm not surprised or offended by Charlie Hebdo marking the anniversary with everything it's got.

According to the Associated Press, the magazine features editorials attacking "university students who wear veils or openly pray in classrooms, hospital patients who refuse medical treatment from someone of the opposite sex and France's intelligence community. Mixed in were blasphemous caricatures targeting a range of beliefs, obscene sketches" and colourful profanity.

One editor wrote the magazine is commemorating colleagues who died "for daring to laugh at religion."

Richard Rohr, a prominent U.S. Catholic priest, has said he loves when atheists laugh at religions for stories like the Garden of Eden, because "No one believes that." Those stories are metaphors, he says, intended to describe a God who is otherwise indescribable.

Charlie Hebdo's atheism is as simplistic as laughing at a virgin birth. The magazine is practically fundamental in its anti-religious stance. Meanwhile, globally, eight in 10 people identify with a religion.

The magazine doesn't even speak to the more secular western experience of faith. In Canada, for example, fully 73 per cent of people believe in God, though only 30 per cent subscribe to a religion.

Not only does a cover like yesterday's not surprise me, then, it doesn't even stimulate me intellectually. The magazine can heap scorn better than most, but it has a juvenile understanding of that which it hates, and constructs no reasonable alternative.

The magazine makes the mistake of thinking insulting people is, de facto, a worthy goal. And in its commitment to offend and anger strangers, it has something in common with terrorist propaganda videos (on a far lesser scale).

On the other hand, the magazine does support the free movement of ideas by exploring the outermost reaches of free speech.

I'll give it that, and then get on with my faith.

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Your essential daily news

HBO will pull the plug on its hit comedy Girls after the show's sixth season next year

On the topic of Navel Gazing

WHO IS BLACK?

Michael Ian Black swears that he has "no interest" in celebrity culture. "I hate it," he said, "maybe because I'm not enough of a celebrity to get the perks." Let's take him at his word. But here's how you might otherwise know the sly comedian:

Wet Hot American Summer
Black stars in the best known sequence of this recently Netflix-revived cult favourite: a surprisingly tender love scene with Bradley Cooper. In his new book, Black reveals that they both wore tube socks because Black was so self-conscious about his feet.

Jim Gaffigan Show

Black plays Daniel, the meticulously put-together antagonist to the show's everyman titular star. The pair have a gift for repartee on Twitter, too. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INTERVIEW

Michael Ian Black shows a vulnerable side in new book

With a pair of deeply honest memoirs, comedian Michael Ian Black has now allowed a public transition from irony-shielded comic prankster to real, fully dimensional person.

And all that pesky humanity has led to some uncomfortable moments.

"Because I have the gift of being unapproachable and kind of a dick, people rarely share with me, but I have noticed that people who have read the book feel like they know me (and) my marriage, and that's a strange thing to encounter," he said recently. "It's especially weird for my wife when people meet her and they're like: 'Oh yes, I know all about you.' That doesn't go over well."

The furiously prolific Black — who is simultaneously starring in several shows including Another Period and The Jim Gaffigan Show, hosting the popular podcast How to Be Amazing and compulsively nurturing a massive Twitter following — has returned to the realm of autobiography with the newly released Navel Gazing. The book finds the Wet Hot American Summer star observing his mother's stoic struggle with cancer while curiously investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him as long as he can remember.

Michael Ian Black's latest book finds him observing his mother's struggle with cancer and investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him since childhood. MIKE POINT/WIRE IMAGE

Somehow, a book about a family member's grave diagnosis is unfathomably funny.

For this he credits his mother, whom he interviewed extensively and "got to know a lot better." For instance, Black's mom followed one of her many major surgeries — which included the removal of her belly button — by taking a marker and scrawling florid thank-yous to hospital staff across her stomach.

Between this intimate memoir and his last, You're Not Doing it Right — which the author says was too personal even for his wife, who has chosen not to read his latest book — Black has revealed depths that even close friends didn't know he had.

The one place he doesn't have to worry about those revelations reverberating, however, is Hollywood. "People in show business don't read," he said. "There's little to no danger of them having read my book."

How is your mother doing?
Terribly. Her illnesses are nonstop and unabating. That's a very hard thing for her to live with and for those of us who love her to live with. But her attitude about it has always been remarkable. It's inspiring.

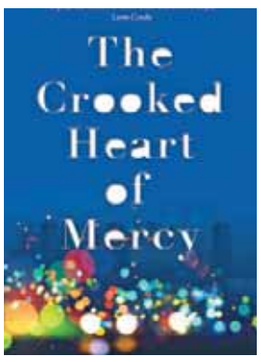
How did she react to your book?
She loved it. There was no pushback about anything, which makes me think she didn't read it. But she said she did, so that's good enough for me. That means I can publish it.

You mentioned your wife Martha didn't want to read it. How about your kids?
Oh God, no, not at all. They don't care about anything.

Even (teenage son) Elijah?
He's expressed no interest in it and I have no interest in sharing it with him. I assume there will come a point in his life — probably after I suffer a heart attack in the next six months — where he will have some curiosity about his history and my life. Now he has two books he can read for that information.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NEW BOOK

Author credits volatile childhood for her sense of humour



Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Billie Livingston has long been haunted by a family story that happened before she was born. Her father — a con artist whom she fictionalized in her 2012 novel One Good Hustle — and his first wife lost their two-year-old son after the toddler accidentally fell out a second-story window. "The shame and fear and grief. How do you ever get over something like that?" asks Livingston.

In her new novel, The Crooked Heart of Mystery (Random House Canada), the Vancouver author attempts to answer this question by drawing on real-life stories.

Following the death of her son, grief-stricken Maggie becomes a domestic helper for a woman who worships at a church that encourages after-death visits from loved ones. Meanwhile, Maggie's estranged husband, Ben, lies in a hospital bed with an unexplained bullet lodged in his head after taking veterinary drugs. (Ben's narrative originated with a Florida news story about a young man who shot himself during a bad mushroom trip, believing he was still asleep.)

Completing the triangle of grief is Maggie's brother Francis, a priest whose appetites for sex and alcohol land him a DUI and the star role in the viral video, "Drunk Priest Propositions Cops." Bullied horrifically as a child for being gay, Francis — whose character stemmed from a priest friend of Livingston's in rehab for alcohol — always found protection in the church, and despite his violations, remains planted in some kind of personal faith.

While The Crooked Heart of Mystery could have been mired in bleak hopelessness, Livingston has a light touch, an ability to find moments of humour even in the trio's heartbreaking situation. It's a gift she credits to her own volatile upbringing.

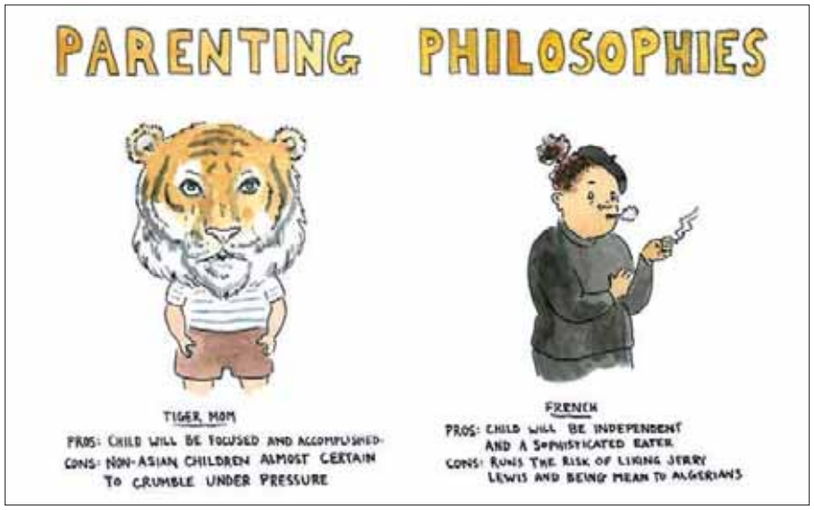
Beyond her father's grifting, her mother was a "pretty severe" addict, and young Livingston spent much of her childhood in and out of foster homes.

"There was a lot of dark stuff in my family," she says.

"There was always some mayhem going on. That's how we dealt with the darkest periods, which was to say something completely outrageous, because how else are you going to survive?"

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

Emily, Emily, quite contrary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TIGER MOM
PROS: CHILD WILL BE FOCUSED AND ACCOMPLISHED
CONS: NON-ASIAN CHILDREN ALMOST CERTAIN TO CRUMBLE UNDER PRESSURE
FRENCH
PROS: CHILD WILL BE INDEPENDENT AND A SOPHISTICATED EATER
CONS: RUNS THE RISK OF LIKING JERRY LEWIS AND BEING MEAN TO ALGERIANS

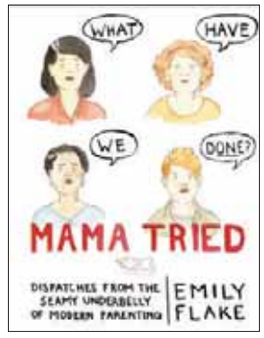
Emily Flake pokes fun at parenting trends of the privileged in Mama Tried: Dispatches from the Seamy Underbelly of Modern Parenting. EMILY FLAKE/VIA TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INTERVIEW

Cartoonist and writer brings humour to parenting book

Emily Flake found out she was pregnant when she was hung over. She later thought she was passing gas when she was actually in labour. She once freaked out and spent hundreds of dollars on creams when her daughter got itchy skin.

Flake unleashes these stories and more in her new book, Mama Tried: Dispatches from the Seamy Underbelly of Modern Parenting. It's a no-holds-barred take on modern-day parenthood, written from a satirical-yet-serious perspective. Flake, a 38-year-old mom of one, pokes fun at "mom shamers" and "baby registries of the one per cent" in quirky drawings, while also writing about her own miscarriage and struggle with postpartum depression.



Why did you want to write this book?
I wanted to write the book for money (laughs). In all seriousness, I'm a cartoonist and a writer and when I had the baby, that's what took up a lot of my brain space. So a lot of my work started to be about that. I was like, "perhaps this could be a book." Also, I found myself wanting to read a book like the one I ended up writing. The books that I found the most helpful and comforting were the ones that were pretty frank about things without being alarmist — something that just made me feel a little bit less alone. I wanted to be able to do that for other parents.

How would you describe it? Satirical?
I think it's sort of baby gallows humour — it's trench parenting. It's cartoons and essays and funny little satirical pieces. It's meant to be a fairly light read but I wanted to be as honest as I possibly could be. There's stuff in there that isn't joking around at all. I just wanted to capture — at the risk of sounding really pretentious — I wanted to capture some kind of truth. It's certainly not like a parenting manual at all.

> **It's sort of baby gallows humour — it's trench parenting. It's cartoons and essays and funny... pieces.**
> Emily Flake, author

Was it challenging to strike the right balance between serious and funny?
Definitely. Because I'm a joke writer, it gets really hard for me to do serious without hitting maudlin. It's hard for me to approach things without a joking take on them. It felt like more of a challenge to be like, "How do I meet this a little more head-on?" without sounding preachy or complainy or weepy. With the parts of the book that are more serious, I tried to hit that tone.

It must be really easy to poke fun at the whole parenting industry because people take it so seriously. Did that make it easier to put this together?
Definitely. It's fairly low hanging fruit at this point. I feel like I kind of have to issue a disclaimer ... I'm talking about a pretty specific and privileged segment of parenting — the professional people who were able to put off having children until their mid-30s and had a career going, etc. I feel like there are some things in the book that are universal but definitely a lot of it is (focused on the privileged).
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MURDER MYSTERY

Tarantino borrows from Christie

While Quentin Tarantino's The Hateful Eight has drawn some mixed reviews, all critics acknowledge there's a distinct note of British bestselling English crime writer Agatha Christie at play in Tarantino's Wyoming-set Western. Here are five instances where the best-selling novelist of all time could have influenced Tarantino.

Warning: This story contains some spoilers for The Hateful Eight.

More than just blustery conditions link Tarantino's The Hateful Eight to Christie's body of work. CONTRIBUTED

The setting

A group of eight characters, bounty hunter, hangman, sheriff and prisoner among them, make acquaintance in an isolated Wyoming haberdashery in The Hateful Eight where they meet their fate. In Christie's 1939 crime novel And Then There Were None (the title replaced a racist original), 10 people end up on an isolated island where justice is served for past misdeeds as a shadowy killer picks them off one at a time.

Christie's story was used for several adaptations, most recently a three-part miniseries shown on BBC One last month.

Blizzard conditions

A mounting blizzard plays a key role in The Hateful Eight, forcing four characters to seek shelter and join others already waiting out the storm at remote stagecoach stop Minnie's Haberdashery. In Christie's murder mystery The Mousetrap, a group is snowed in at Monkswell Manor, a similarly isolated mansion in the remote British countryside.

Fun fact: Couples run both businesses: Minnie Mink and Sweet Dave in The Hateful Eight and Mollie and Giles Ralston in The Mousetrap.

Poison pen

Agatha Christie fan and research chemist Kathryn Harkup wrote in her recent book A is for Arsenic: The Poisons of Agatha Christie that the writer "used poison to kill her characters more often than any other murder method." She goes on to detail how 14 poisons were used in 14 novels. Tarantino uses poison slipped into an unsuspecting victim's drink for a devilish twist in The Hateful Eight.

More Mousetrap

Tarantino saw The Mousetrap in London's West End in July 2009 while on a press tour for Inglourious Basterds. The London Mirror reported: "Our spy said: 'He loved it and quizzed the crew, as if he wanted to do something with it himself.'"
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Brendan Dassey is escorted into court in 2007 for sentencing. Dassey's case is at the centre of the Netflix documentary series Making a Murderer. HERALD TIMES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Why Making a Murderer has everybody talking

STREAMING

A primer to the doc dissecting a complex legal case

The 10-part Netflix documentary series Making a Murderer, which casts doubt on the legal process in the case of convicted killers Steven Avery and his then-teenage nephew Brendan Dassey, has prompted celebrities to armchair sleuths to flood online message boards and Twitter feeds.

Authorities involved with the Wisconsin case say the series is slanted and omits crucial facts that led to Avery and Dassey being found guilty in the death of photographer Teresa Halbach.

The filmmakers, meanwhile, are standing by their work that spans nearly a decade and largely concentrates on the defence and perspective of Avery and Dassey's relatives.

The rush of attention has left many wondering: How did we get here? And what's next?

The back story

Avery made national headlines in 2003 when he was released after spending nearly two decades behind bars after being wrongfully convicted of rape. Two years later, Avery and Dassey were charged with killing Halbach, who visited the Avery family salvage yard to take photos of a minivan on Halloween. Her bones and belongings were found burned near Avery's trailer. Both were convicted and sentenced to life terms, but only Dassey is eligible for parole — in 2048.

The series' take

The documentary strongly suggests the possibility that Manitowoc County sheriff's deputies planted evidence against Avery, including a key found in his bedroom and blood found in the victim's vehicle. But Sheriff Robert Hermann denied that Tuesday. He said he watched the series: "I call it a film. It's missing a lot of important pieces of evidence."

Authorities say doc is biased

The series spends much of its time detailing the perspective of Avery and Dassey family members. The case's special prosecutor, Ken Kratz has told other media outlets that the documentary ignores the majority of the physical evidence. The omissions include the fact that Avery's DNA was found on the hood latch on Halbach's SUV, which was hidden on the salvage lot. Kratz has also said a bullet fired from Avery's gun was found in his garage with Halbach's DNA on it.

The filmmakers disagree

Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos have stood by their work. They said in an email to the AP that critics who might say they intentionally omitted or underplayed key evidence to make the series more entertaining or tragic are wrong. "Those accusations are untrue and unfounded," the statement said.

Online petition

It seems unlikely an online petition seeking a pardon will work. The request posted on Change.org started by petitioning President Barack Obama, who has no such authority in this type of case, since it's not a federal matter. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker spokesperson Laurel Patrick said Tuesday in an email to the AP that the governor hasn't watched the series and that "early in his administration, Gov. Walker made the decision not to issue pardons. Those who feel they have been wrongly convicted can seek to have their convictions overturned by a higher court."

Viewer reaction

Celebrities have tweeted about how into the series they are, late night talk show host Seth Meyers spoofed it and fake Twitter accounts have been set up for some of the main players in the case. However, Sheriff Hermann said some of his officers have received threats in emails and voicemails. He said one was from a convicted felon who said an officer should "take his own life, or else he'd come up there and take it for him." Hermann said Tuesday that threat was passed along to Florida authorities to investigate. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Inside Spotify's musical genre splicing

SONIC ALGORITHMS

Breaking down music by its digital signatures

Would you classify Justin Bieber as pop or "pop Christmas"? And is Arcade Fire a rock band or "permanent wave"? How about describing Ed Sheeran as "neo mellow," Alabama Shakes as "stomp and holler" or the versatile Grimes as "grave wave," "metropopolis," "nu gaze," or all of the above?

Spotify's "data alchemist" Glenn McDonald can proudly claim authorship of some of those eccentric descriptors. His company has used a complex algorithm to analyze and categorize upwards of 60 million songs on a molecular level — and the micro-classifications now number 1,387 sub-genres in total.

Ultimately, these machinations are allowing a new level of specificity to answer that impossible old first-date query: What kind of music are you into?

"The most interesting thing is how much music there is in the world," McDonald said. "The number of places where I expected to find five or 10 bands and found 200 is just amazing."

Using a tool called machine listening, songs are analyzed by Spotify's music-intelligence division the Echo Nest based on their digital signatures for a number of factors, including tempo, acoustic-ness, energy, danceability, strength of the beat and emotional tone.

Taken together, those numbers can identify the distinguishing aural characteristics of different genres and regional sounds. McDonald has provided a visual representation of the subtle sonic differences at everynoise.com, which maps music along a spectrum where mechanical sounds reside at the top, organic at the bottom, atmospheric on the left and bouncy on the right.

The still-evolving tool can highlight the subtle differences in the hip-hop of Quebec and Finland, for instance, or create cross-genre comparisons between such unlikely bedfellows as Thai indie and Spanish new wave. Any curiosity about what a genre called "necrogrind," "fallen angel" or "electrofox" could possibly sound like can be satisfied with a click.

The process is still imperfect. At one point, the computers confused the sound of the banjo with human singers, simply because not enough banjo samples had been entered. In another instance, Indonesian dangdut was classified as near-identical to American country because, McDonald said, the computers had no protocol to account for twang.

"(People) imagine metal humanoid robots sitting in chairs with silver headphones on nodding mechanically to songs and making up their robot minds," said McDonald. "But the process is totally different. There's no emotion involved. The machines are not pretending to be people.

"They're just trying to find mathematical ways of approximating the effect that humans get from music so the scores can be intelligible and reliable."

Once the machines have identified sonic similarities, a human touch is required to research the sub-genres or create new ones, a task that often falls to McDonald himself. It can be vexing as sub-genres are divvied into progressively tinier fractions; indie pop, for instance, has been subdivided into shiver pop, gauze pop, etherpop, indie fuzz pop, popgaze, and so on.

In analyzing so much musical minutiae, McDonald has noticed that for all this century's rampant boundary-blurring, distinctive differences still exist between types of music.

"I don't think genres have gone away … any more than cuisines have disappeared. There are more fusions," he said. "So just like you can find the Korean burrito place, that doesn't mean there aren't also Korean restaurants and Mexican restaurants.

"Maybe the firmness of the boundaries has gone away. It's more possible to exist in the spaces between genres as they blend into each other."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'stomp & holler'

'grave wave'

'neo mellow'

An algorithm used by Spotify defines the sound of Alabama Shakes frontwoman Brittany Howard, left, experimental musicmaker Grimes and singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran. GETTY IMAGES

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

I'd rather not be kept in the poop

THE SHOW: Three commercials (Lifetime)
THE MOMENT: The Horror

So I'm watching Lifetime, whose slogan is Television for Women, and a commercial for a constipation product comes on: An accessibly pretty brunette frowns, rubs her tummy, and glugs down a grainy beverage. (Have you noticed that Everywomen are always brunettes, while Bombshells are blondes and Natural Women are redheads?) In the morning, stretching in her jammies, Accessible Brunette smiles to show us all is well… back there. Okay, people need such products, fine. Then a second commercial appears: A different Accessible Brunette walks along clutching a brown shoulder bag, which, very distressingly, grows larger and larger until she nearly buckles. After she consumes her grainy beverage, her purse shrinks back to normal size. While I'm reeling from this depiction of someone collapsing under the bulk of her own poo, a third commercial arrives. This time, Accessible Brunette rides down a spiral slide, but gets stuck halfway — until she consumes a beverage, and glides to the, well, bottom. So now I've watched a woman go from having a tummyache to toting around her waste to actually becoming the waste itself, and I'm thinking, what do Lifetime viewers eat, or perhaps more importantly not eat, that they suffer such indignities? Don't they deserve one commercial where men are buying these products? Why aren't the guys who watch The History Channel or Outdoor Life Network inundated with images of Rakish Fellows toting their poop around? Why is it all beer and car ads for men, and caa-caa for women?

So now I've watched a woman go from having a tummyache to toting around her waste to actually becoming the waste itself

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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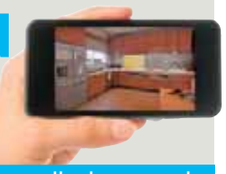

Whirlpool unveils new connected kitchen that can be controlled remotely

MEET THE CONDO

Green living in Mount Pleasant

THE INDEPENDENT

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

The Independent is a Rize build located in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. These buildings boast multiple brick colours, patterns and metal panel cladding with a wood grain finish — a design inspired by the surrounding community. Each home provides a stunning view of the city. Units are nearly sold out.

Housing Amenities

Bathrooms have a spa-like feel, and include a contemporary soaker tub and a one-piece sink vanity. Other interior features include laminated wood flooring, a hydronic heating and cooling system, European baseboards and custom Italian cabinetry. The Independent will have a dog spa, a fitness room, a workshop room and a multi-purpose lounge.

Location and transit

This stylish and historic neighbourhood is close to transit, including the Canada Line. Residents are encouraged to use The Independent's car sharing program, and the development includes 300 bike stalls for anyone looking to further reduce their carbon footprint. The Independent is also in walking distance of many cafés, shops and restaurants.

In the neighbourhood

Mount Pleasant is known as one of Vancouver's hip and edgy neighbourhoods with over 350 shops and services. Foodies have a plethora of cafés and pubs to choose from. Onsite, there's a 20,000 sq. ft. private park, nestled between the towers and the podium.

NEED TO KNOW

What: The Independent
Builder: Rize
Architect: Acton Ostry Architects
Location: Mount Pleasant, at Broadway, Kingsway, 10th and Watson
Building: Modern townhomes
Sizes: From 500 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft
Pricing: From $269,900
Suites: One, two or three bedrooms; 258 units in total in four separate buildings
Status: Under construction, to be completed by fall 2017
Telephone: 604-879-8850
Website: independentatmain.com

4 BEAUTIFUL BLASTS FROM THE DESIGN WORLD PAST

They say that everything that goes around, comes around. Home decor trends for 2016 are certainly proving that true. Look for inspiration from the 1970s and '80s when accessing the trends for this year— a flashback in time becomes the future for our homes.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada

1 Darth Vader Toaster
The scariest reminder of the late '70s is now available to imprint your toast each morning. $75, UrbanOutfitters.com.

2 Desigual Denim Folk Duvet Cover
Add some jean patches and flower-power for some Partridge family love in the bedroom. $179, Simons.ca

3 Retro Vase
They'll think you dug this one up from your grannies basement. $65, CB2.com

4 Dial Dining Table
'70s gold and walnut offer up stylish dining from the past. $900, CB2.com

Plaid is the it-pattern of the season

TRENDS

Design on everything from linens to ChapStick

Plaids are having a fashion moment as retailers and designers play with the classic pattern. But the apparel and footwear industries are sharing the love: Fresh takes on plaid have made headway in housewares and home decor, too.

"The great thing about plaid is that you can take it in so many different directions," said Kristen Chalupa, a kitchen and tabletop product manager for Crate & Barrel.

Through scale, colour and application, plaids can be complex and traditional, or simplified for a clean, updated look, she said.

"There's something very recognizable and nostalgic about plaid," Chalupa said.

Her company went for nostalgia but also took a more modern approach in recent offerings, with updated plaids in table linens and such kitchen items as an oven mitt, pot holder, apron and dishtowel in a matching pattern of bright red, green, yellow and blue.

Target went "mad for plaid" in a variety of ways, including a limited-edition collaboration with sportswear designer Adam Lippes in mostly apparel and accessories, playing on the classic buffalo design. The retailer also offered some unlikely items such as special-issue Chapstick sets of three lip balms and plaid-decorated bottles of Listerine mouthwash in yellow, green and blue.

Both classic and contemporary plaids are plentiful throughout the retail universe in couches, curtains and bedding.

Pinterest is awash with ways to decorate a home using plaid, including wallpaper in red to anchor a cosy, book-filled study, and building a plaid design in contemporary bathroom or kitchen wall tile.

The design need not scream rustic, country or all things Scotland. Grahambrown.com offers a thoroughly modern take on plaid in a charcoal-and-white wall covering that lends a more sophisticated air against a white floor and contemporary white easy chair. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GET THE LOOK

Retail goes mad for plaid

Here are a few of the expected and unexpected ways plaid is being used by designers:

1 Shower curtains
Plaid gets a wavy, aquatic look in this design by Watershed.

2 Throws
Foxford Woollen Mills gives the pattern a soft, subdued look.

3 Lip balm
Target puckered up to plaid with this ChapStick.

4 Bed sheets
Ellen DeGeneres is on trend with this On Air Cotton Berber Reversible FL/Q Quilt Set.

Final Homes Remain

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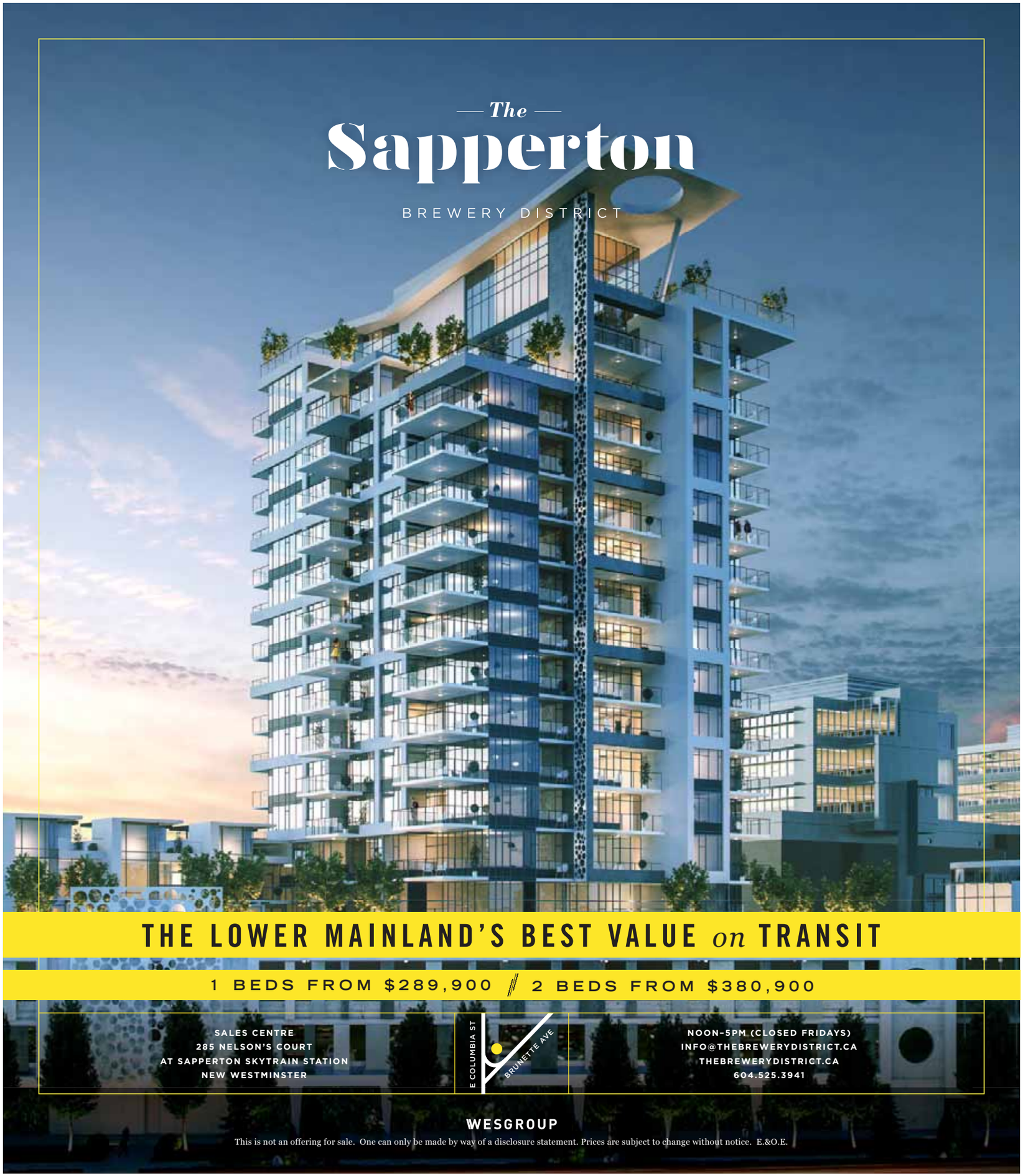
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metro SPORTS

Lakers GM Mitch Kupchak told ESPN that Kobe Bryant's retirement tour comes ahead of the development of L.A.'s young players

Taking criticism in stride

CANUCKS

Jake Virtanen returns to Vancouver after world juniors

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

If he was at all bothered by the recent vitriol sent his way on social media, Jake Virtanen didn't show it.

Virtanen took part in the Canucks' optional morning skate Wednesday before sharing his experience from the annual tournament in which he was heavily criticized following Canada's quarter-final loss to Finland.

Lack of production and ill-timed penalties, combined with the fact Canada underachieved, led some to vent their frustration toward the 19-year-old Virtanen on Twitter and rarely is such a reaction ever constructive, fair or reasonable.

"Everyone has their own opinions," Virtanen told reporters.

"A lot of people can talk on social media. It's not going to bother me. It's something I'd want to take back — that second penalty when I slashed the guy's stick and it was just emotion out there."

Maintaining discipline at emotionally charged times will need to be part of that learning experience for a young player the Canucks are trying to develop into a power forward.

Virtanen said returning to Canada without a medal was a "bitter" feeling. He admitted the online onslaught caught him off guard.

Canada's Jake Virtanen throws a check at Finland's Juho Lammikko on Saturday in Helsinki. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Canada wants to win all the time. (The fans) have so much passion and obviously when we don't get what we want, people take it out on people," he said. "I guess I was the guy."

> **"(The fans) have so much passion and obviously when we don't get what we want, people take it out on people. I guess I was the guy.**
> Jake Virtanen

Head coach Willie Desjardins said he wasn't sure when he'd get Virtanen back into the lineup. After Wednesday's game versus Carolina, the Canucks don't play again until Saturday, when they host the Tampa Bay Lightning.

When it comes to dealing with harsh criticism, Virtanen need only look to neighbouring stalls in the dressing room, where the Sedin twins sit, to seek out advice on how best to handle it.

Daniel and Henrik Sedin came to Vancouver with intense expectations and were ripped on occasion for their style of play and early point production.

The Sedin twins have long since overcome whatever has been said about them in the past, and gone on to have terrific careers.

"For us, looking back, I don't think we would be where we are right now if we didn't go through those tough years," said Daniel Sedin. "He'll learn from this, too, and be better from it."

IN BRIEF

Lynch returns to practice following ab surgery

Just in time for the playoffs, Marshawn Lynch is back to practising with the Seattle Seahawks.

Lynch was a full participant in practice on Wednesday, his first on-field work with the Seahawks since undergoing abdominal surgery in late November and missing the final seven games of the regular season.

Marshawn Lynch
GETTY IMAGES

"I think he's done a great job of recognizing where this team is at and their vibe, and he's come right in and went to work and it's been really good," offensive line coach Tom Cable said.

The expectation is if Lynch can make it through the week, he will be the presumptive starter for Sunday's NFC wild-card game at Minnesota.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Preds trade Jones for Blue Jackets' Johansen

The Nashville Predators traded defenceman Seth Jones to the Columbus Blue Jackets for centre Ryan Johansen on Wednesday, giving up a young piece of their defence in search of some more offence.

Johansen, 23, has 79 goals and 114 assists in 309 career games and was the fourth overall pick in the 2010 draft. Jones, 21, was the fourth overall pick in the 2013 draft.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cristian Techera, left, will return to the Whitecaps in 2016. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLS

Whitecaps fielding trade inquiries ahead of draft

The Bug is back.

The Vancouver Whitecaps made it official, bringing back Cristian Techera after completing a transfer agreement with Uruguayan side Club Atlético River Plate Montevideo using targeted allocation money (TAM) and signing the small but shifty midfielder to a multi-year contract.

Techera, who is listed at five-foot-two, joined the Whitecaps in April last year.

In 22 games, he scored seven goals and added five assists.

"He had a very productive two-thirds of a season for us last year," said club president Bob Lenarduzzi on Wednesday.

"His goal production and assists, considering the shortened period of time he was here, clearly indicated that he's an impact player. The fact he's coming back now for pre-season and with his wife and child and he'll be settled will hopefully result in better production."

7

The number of goals Techera scored in 22 games for the Whitecaps last season.

The official announcement of the new Techera deal comes eight days before the MLS SuperDraft.

The Whitecaps select 16th overall in the first round. But there is the possibility they could move up in the order.

Lenarduzzi said the Whitecaps have had inquiries from other teams about two or three specific players on Vancouver's roster.

"I expect that to intensify with all the clubs getting together at the draft," he said.

Priorities for the Whitecaps include bolstering their offensive attack as well as the right back position.

"Given that we have some assets that people are interested in, we'll consider any offers from clubs around the league," Lenarduzzi said.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

IN BRIEF

Crosby left off all-star team
The upcoming NHL all-star game will be missing one of the sport's top players.

Pittsburgh Penguins forward Sidney Crosby wasn't included on the roster list Wednesday for the league's mid-season showcase in Nashville on Jan. 30-31.

As part of a new format this year, players will take part in a three-game tournament, played in a 3-on-3 format, and featuring teams representing each NHL division.

Daniel Sedin will represent the Vancouver Canucks.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brady's ankle healing after Patriots give him time off
New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady says his right ankle is feeling better. Brady walked without an apparent limp for his media availability on Wednesday. He said getting the week off before the Patriots' first playoff game will be helpful. "This is the first time we've had off in quite a while," he said.

Brady has received treatment for his ankle after injuring himself in Sunday's 20-10 Dolphins victory.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Everton lead City 2-1 in League Cup semifinal
Romelu Lukaku kept up his hot scoring streak by grabbing a late winner for Everton to beat Manchester City 2-1 in the first leg of their English League Cup semifinal on Wednesday.

Lukaku restored Everton's lead in a thrilling second half at Goodison Park, two minutes after substitute Jesus Navas equalized for City on a counterattack led by Sergio Aguero. Defender Ramiro Funes Mori put Everton ahead off a rebound in first-half injury time. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Royals re-sign Gordon
All-star outfielder Alex Gordon agreed to a $72-million, four-year deal Wednesday to remain with the World Series champion Kansas City Royals.

Gordon hit .271 with 13 homers and 48 RBIs in 104 games last season.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Griffey, Piazza enter the Hall

BASEBALL

Mariners great Cooperstown bound along with top catcher

Ken Griffey Jr. was considered Mr. Clean during 22 years in the major leagues, untainted by accusations of drug use as he climbed the home-run list during the height of the Steroids Era.

He nearly made a clean sweep in Hall of Fame voting.

Griffey received 437 of 440 votes in his first appearance on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot, a record 99.3 per cent.

"It's real simple," he explained after Wednesday's announcement. "I've always said that I've got to look my kids in the eyes and you want to play fair."

Mike Piazza, the top offensive catcher in baseball history, was elected, too, and will be inducted along with Griffey in Cooperstown on July 24. Among the many muscled sluggers whose accomplishments were questioned during a time when chemists preyed on clubhouses, Piazza was made to wait until his fourth appearance on the ballot. After falling 28 votes shy last year, he was selected on 365 (83 per cent).

Griffey topped the previous high percentage of 98.84, set when Tom Seaver appeared on 425 of 430 ballots in 1992. The identities of the three writers who did not vote for Griffey was not immediately known.

A player needs to appear on 75 per cent of ballots to gain election. Jeff Bagwell missed by 15 votes and former Montreal Expos outfielder Tim Raines by 23.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Piazza
GETTY IMAGES

Ken Griffey Jr.
GETTY IMAGES FILE

KEY STATS

Ken Griffey Jr.:
13-time All-Star outfielder. Finished with 630 homers, sixth on the career list.

Mike Piazza:
12-time All-Star hit better than .300 in nine straight seasons and finishing with 427 home runs, including a record 396 when he was in the game behind the plate.

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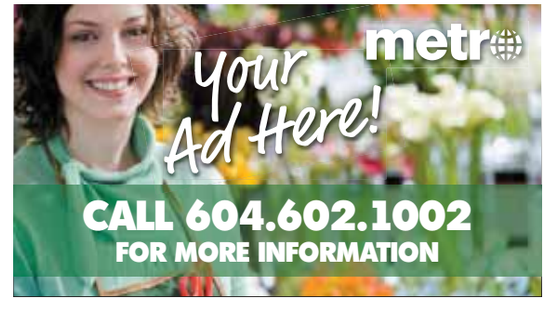

RECIPE Pumpkin Gnocchi

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

So good it's worth the effort.

Ready in
Prep time: 60 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 3/4 cup fresh ricotta
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 lb cremini mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed and sliced
- 3 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped

Directions
1. In a large bowl, combine potato puree with ricotta until well blended. Add the Parmesan, sugar, salt and nutmeg and blend. Add a 1/2 cup of flour at a time until a soft dough forms.
2. Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface and separate into 3 or 4 pieces. Using your hands, roll dough out into a long, even tube, about 10-inch in diameter. With a sharp paring knife, cut each rope into about 20 pieces. Keep working until you have about a 60 pieces.
3. Bring a big pot of well-salted water to a boil.
4. Melt butter in a large skillet until it starts to brown. Add mushrooms and sage and cook for 3 minutes, and remove from heat.
5. Add gnocchi to the boiling water about a dozen at a time. Cook each batch for about 5 or 6 minutes, until the gnocchi floats to the top. Allow water to return to a boil between batches. Place cooked gnocchi in a large bowl and set aside.
6. Once all of the gnocchi is cooked, put the skillet back on the heat. Add your gnocchi and allow it all to heat up together. Gently stir so the pasta gets covered in the sage butter. Serve with a fresh sage for garnish.

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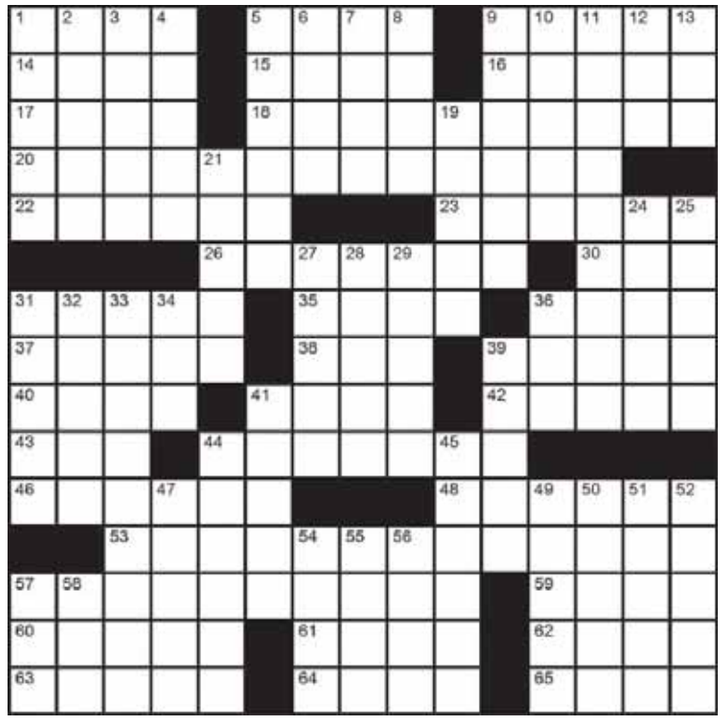
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. 1300 in ancient Rome
5. Mail
9. Record label
14. Director Mr. Petri
15. Entreaty
16. Sir Newton
17. Composer Mr. Schifrin
18. Crown Royal Northern __ __ (Canadian drink which is the 2016 World Whisky of the Year winner as chosen by whisky-expert-from-Britain Jim Murray)
20. Vancouver-born singer/songwriter, lead singer of Chilliwack: 2 wds.
22. Three sharps music key: letter + word
23. Meal
26. Whistlers in kitchens
30. French 'tea'
31. Stockpile
35. Tilled
36. "Buenos __!"
37. Metal mixture
38. Decide
39. Make a funny noise when laughing
40. Scratch
41. Math course, for short
42. Canadian actor Dean McDermott's mother-in-law
43. Olde-style word
44. Bitterness
46. Shoe part
48. Rent your apartment out
53. Tossed workout items: 2 wds.
57. __ Milk (Product by #11-Down)
59. Lioness in "The Lion King" (1994)
60. French composer, Erik __ (b.1866 - d.1925)
61. Crate strip
62. Mideast ruler, variantly
63. Toboggans
64. Choir member
65. Glasgow gal

DOWN
1. Grissol product, __ Toast
2. Insurance filing
3. "You're My World": 1964 hit for __ Black
4. Actor/rapper, LL __ _
5. Globe
6. Exuberance
7. Dweeb
8. Canadian comic actor Mr. Foley
9. Slangy insults
10. Impede, in law
11. As per #57-Across... Food brand with a flowery name and logo
12. Islet
13. Champion
19. Boo-booed
21. Overly sentimental
24. The __ (Tallest building in London in England)
25. Irritable
27. Rose's ouch!-inducer
28. Subject
29. Avril Lavigne's 2002 debut album: 2 wds.
31. Mojave plants
32. "__ __ the Family"
33. Fellow student
34. By what method?
36. Genetic stuff
39. Exfoliating __ (Skincare product)
41. South American animal
44. Changes
45. "Man I __ __ Be" by k-os
47. Lukewarm
49. Vapid
50. Andes animal
51. Island near the Statue of Liberty
52. Sovereign sorts
54. House, in Havana
55. "__ be okay." (There, there)
56. Clean-cut
57. Cousin of -enne
58. Ms. Bertinelli, to pals

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You will be taken by surprise no matter how prepared you are today. Changes on the work front may be unsettling but if you stay calm and use your head you can easily change them to your advantage.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You have a lot of new responsibilities and are wondering if you are doing too much. Things will get on top of you today to such an extent you'll be forced to cut back on commitments.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
It is too late to back out of something you thought would be easy — you must go through with it. Strive to make a good job of it and, next time, don't volunteer so eagerly.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
The Sun is at odds with Uranus, planet of changes, and it will shock you out of your complacency. You've coasted along long enough — now you must live up to your potential.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Try not to attach too much importance to minor setbacks. Deal with problems as they arise and don't take anything too seriously. Your attitude to what happens is most important.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Something will force you to change your plans but you don't have to abandon them altogether. The route you were planning to take may be blocked but there are other ways to reach your destination. Be flexible.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You won't get your way today, especially on the home front. You are advised to let partners and loved ones call the shots just this once.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Forces over which you have no control will upset your plans but the long-term forecast is still good. You may even be pleased that you were compelled to change direction. Everything happens for a reason.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Try not to fall out with a friend today because it may be a long time before you get the chance to make up again. What they do may be annoying but you will only make matters worse if you make a big deal of it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Like it or not you will have to admit that no matter how much you might want to fit into a certain environment it was never meant to be. Today's Sun-Uranus link indicates it is time to bring to an end something.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Be true to your principles and do the right thing. Your reputation will surely head south if you cut corners or try to get round the rules. There is much more than money at stake.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You'll find lots to occupy your mind today, if you enjoy a challenge. But if you're the type who gets upset when nothing goes right you might want to stay in bed a few hours longer!

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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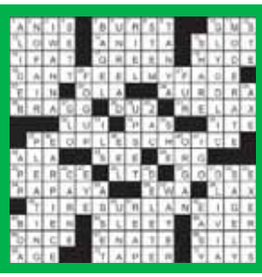

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